



## **Floods**

### Information for the Public

**Flood affected residents are encouraged to monitor flood forecasts and health alerts issued by their local radio and news stations and public health authority.** *A public health authority is a governmental agency responsible for matters of public health, such as a local health department. A record (amount) of rain fell in (?) hours between (time) inundating streams and storm water drains and flooding into homes and businesses in (location area).*

While it's easy to panic in a flood and escape may be the first thing on your mind, make sure you keep a rational head and follow the suggestions below if you are faced with the unfortunate scenario of experiencing a flood. By doing this, you'll increase your chances of surviving a flood, should one occur.

**Avoid walking in flood waters.** Walking in flood water can be very dangerous and is to be avoided at all costs. It might be tempting to walk in flood waters in order to get to a safer area, but it is very risky. Walking in flood water has many hidden dangers that most people don't even realize. Flood water moves faster than it appears and can carry debris which might injure you. ***Children should NEVER play around high water, storm drains, viaducts, or creeks.***

**Avoid driving in flood water.** If you are in a vehicle, avoid driving through flooded areas. Vehicles can easily be swept up in water. If you are stranded on a piece of land and surrounded by flood waters, wait for rescue personnel rather than attempting to walk or drive in the flood waters surrounding you.

**Flood water can be dangerous to your health.** Drowning isn't the only risk that flood waters present. Flood water can contain dangerous bacteria and other pollutants and can even be contaminated with raw sewage. Because of this, wading through flood waters can be just as unhealthy as wading through human waste and you definitely should never ingest this type of water. Flood water also poses the danger of electrical shock. Downed wires pose a serious electrical hazard in flooded areas. This is another reason why it is so important to stay out of flood water until professional rescue crews arrive.

**Be sure the water is safe to drink and swim.** While flood water is not inherently infectious, people should take the same precautions they would with any pond, lake, river or swimming pool and avoid drinking or swallowing the water.

**Standing water makes a perfect home for mosquitos to breed.** Flood waters can increase the population of mosquitoes. Regular use of mosquito repellents, such as DEET, while outdoors can protect you from mosquitos.

**Be cautious of wild animals.** Avoid contact with wild animals (skunks, raccoons, possums, etc.) displaced by flood water to prevent potential exposure to rabies and other animal-borne illnesses.

## **Flood Facts**

### **Information for the Public**

#### **What is a flood and when do most occur?**

A flood is the inundation of a normally dry area caused by an increased water level in an established watercourse, such as a river, stream, drainage ditch, or ponding of water at or near the point where the rain fell. Floods can occur anytime during the year. However, many occur seasonally after winter snow melts or heavy spring rains.

#### **What are flash floods?**

Flash floods occur suddenly, usually within 6 hours of the rain event, and result from heavy localized rainfall or levee failures. Flash floods can begin before the rain stops. Water level on small streams may rise quickly in heavy rainstorms, especially near the headwaters of river basins. Heavy rains can also cause flash flooding in areas where the floodplain has been urbanized.

#### **What are other causes of flooding in Michigan?**

Ice jams and dam failures can also cause both flooding and flash flooding.

#### **Are people killed as a result of floods?**

Many people are killed by flash floods when driving or walking on roads and bridges that are covered by water. In fact, flash floods are the number one weather-related killer in the United States. Even six inches of fast-moving flood water can knock you off your feet, and a depth of only two feet of water will float many of today's automobiles. If you are in a car and water starts rising, get out and move to higher ground.

#### **What is a flood watch?**

A flood watch indicates that flash flooding or flooding is possible within the designated WATCH area -- be alert. It is issued to inform the public and cooperating agencies that current and developing weather conditions are such that there is a threat of flooding, but the occurrence is neither certain nor imminent.

#### **What is a flash flood or flood warning?**

A flash flood or flood warning indicates that flash flooding or flooding is already occurring or imminent within the designated WARNING area -- take necessary precautions at once. When a

flash flood or flood warning is issued for your area, act quickly. Get out of areas subject to flooding and avoid areas where flooding has already occurred.

**What is a flash flood or flood statement?**

A flash flood or flood statement is used for follow-up information regarding a flash flood or flood event.

**Reference Flood Facts:**

1. Michigan Severe Weather Awareness: <http://mcswa.com/default.aspx>